

THE PRIVILEGED MAN

NO. 813

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 31, 1868,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Then washed I you with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you also with broidered work, and shod you with badgers’ skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I decked you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. Thus were you decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; you did eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and you were exceeding beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom. And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty: for it was perfect through your comeliness, which I had put upon you, says the Lord GOD.”
Ezekiel 16:9-14.

THE root of Israel’s nation was originally a lone man, whose family and dependants formed a small Bedouin tribe, wandering throughout the plains of Canaan. God separated and selected Abraham, who was in no way distinct from others in his parentage, and declared that in him and in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. When the tribe had somewhat multiplied, God found them in Egypt, a herd of slaves helplessly crushed beneath the foot of Pharaoh, sorely burdened with labors for which they received no reward, without spirit to resent the oppressions of their taskmasters, and without power to succeed had the energy been there.

Yet God brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, chased out powerful nations before them, settled them in the most fertile country, and there multiplied them at such an extraordinary rate, and enriched and endowed them with such power, that the little Kingdom of Israel became famous among the nations of the earth, and in the days of Solomon its scepter was respected far and wide. The nations of the earth stood still and wondered how so small a monarchy had come to be so exceeding rich and great. It was entirely through the favor of JEHOVAH that these great blessings had been received, He had a favor to Abraham’s race, He revealed Himself to them and not to others, chose them to be His people, and made them the custodians of His law.

His worship was kept up among them, and while they were faithful to Him they were a happy and a prosperous people, whose renown went forth to Tarshish and the isles, and the excellence of whose laws and government was respected and admired even by such distant nations as those which were governed by the queen of the South. The beauty of the nation consisted entirely in what God had done for it, its comeliness was a comeliness which JEHOVAH had put upon it. It was a nation wealthy, intelligent, free, and upon the whole pure and happy as long as it remained faithful to its God.

Our business, this morning, is not with that nation, but ourselves. Our meditations, to be profitable, must be personal. Vainly do we blame departed nations, usefully may we judge ourselves. Children of God, I shall address myself to you. God has done great things for us, whereof we are glad. All that God did for His Israel was but a type and shadow of what He has done for His own beloved and redeemed ones, whom He has distinguished beyond all men who dwell upon the face of the earth. I shall ask you, O you sons of God, *to contemplate the bounties of the Lord towards His people*, and then, secondly, for a short time, *to draw reflections from your contemplations*.

I. Let us, each man for himself, sitting in this house before the Lord, REVIEW THE LORD'S LOVING-KINDNESS, and contemplate the amazing bounties which have come to us from the blessed fount of His grace.

To help your meditations, let me remind you where you were when divine loving-kindness pitched upon you effectually, and you knew its power experientially in your own consciences. You were, as others are, lovers of sin, having no desires towards righteousness and salvation. You had sinned, and you continued in sin, and found delight therein. You were defiled, depraved, condemned, and ready to perish, like the infant whom Ezekiel has described, you lay cast out and forsaken, polluted in your blood. You had no power to cleanse yourself, neither were there to be found any friends through whom cleansing might possibly come to you. You were both loathsome and helpless. As the loathsomeness necessarily would have involved your eternal ruin, so your helplessness took away from you all hope of eternal safety. Some of you had plunged into open sin, others, who had been kept therefrom, yet had a den of unclean birds within their hearts.

Our past lives will not do to look at, our state before conversion is something to be blushed over—we should repent of it in dust and ashes, and yet the eye of JEHOVAH had fixed itself upon us from before the foundations of the world, and when He saw us ruined first by Adam's fall, and afterwards by our own practical iniquity, He did not take away that eye of regard, nor did His heart change towards us, but He loved us, loved us still, loved us when there was nothing in us to love, nothing to evoke His complacency, nothing even that could call forth His benevolence, for our sin was such a counter power against our misery, that if our misery might have made JEHOVAH pity us, our sin must have made Him hate us, His love was utterly causeless by anything within us, but it sprang up spontaneously from the mysterious wellhead of His infinite goodness. Blessed be God, that when we were lost, and lost forever, sovereign mercy interposed.

Let us consider the list of the favors received in the order in which we find them set forth in the text. According to the prophet, one of the first gifts of the divine favor is *washing*. "Then I washed you with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you." Now, remember, you who have been immersed in the—

*"Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,"*

remember when you were washed, and thoroughly washed, and sing aloud—

*"'Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin;
'Tis by the water and the blood
Our souls are washed from sin."*

"But," says the apostle, and what a blessed "but" it is, and what a weight of meaning there is in it, "But you are washed." He had been giving a very fearful description of what some of the saints had been, "Such were some of you," and then he puts this in at the end of it, "But you are washed," as if the being washed had taken away whatever defilement might have been there.

Remember, beloved, when you were first washed, recall the hour when, believing in Jesus Christ, you felt in a moment that you were saved, what bliss was crowded into that hour! Your acceptance in the Beloved was sealed upon your heart by the Holy Spirit, you enjoyed a peace with God which passed all understanding, the result of pardoned sin, remember that day of blessing, and be grateful! But I want you to recollect that you are washed this morning. You are now in the sight of God as a believer without a spot, for "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." Do not look upon your cleansing as a thing of the past, to be forgotten, you are at this present moment "clean every whit" in the sight of God through Jesus' blood. There is no sin in God's Book recorded against the believer. "Who is he who condemns, now that Christ has died?"

Oh, perfect justification! How shall I prize you enough? Oh, perfect pardon! What shall I compare with you? These two things put together are enough to make a heaven upon earth, even to the most disconsolate and afflicted of the sons of men. “Then washed I you with water.” In this respect we may say that we have been washed twice, first with the blood by which the guilt of sin is removed, and then by the energetic power of the Holy Spirit we have been washed from the impurity and power of sin, so that we are clean in a double sense before God. And here is the beauty of it, it is done thoroughly, “Yea, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you.” Your depravity is not gone, your old nature is not removed—it shall be before long—but your old guilt is completely gone, and your present criminality is utterly blotted out—

*“In thy Surety thou art free,
His dear hands were pierced for thee;
With His spotless vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One.*

*Oh, the heights and depths of grace!
Shining with meridian blaze;
Here the sacred records show
Sinners black, but comely too.”*

The sins of twenty years ago are drowned beneath the billows of the Red Sea of Jesus’ atoning blood, the sins of yesterday have shared the same fate, and the sins of today the same. “I thoroughly washed your blood from you.”

Now, believer, let not the devil rob you this morning, of a sense of your complete cleansing. Recollect what you were, but at the same time remember you are not now what you once were. “Old things have passed away; all things have become new.” Jesus Christ has said, “I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities.” I say Jesus has said it, said it to you by His Holy Spirit bearing witness in your heart. Come afresh to the cross and look up, and as you see those dear wounds, sweet fountains of immaculate perfection, rejoice that it is written, “Yea, I washed you with water, I thoroughly purged your blood from you.”

The next mercy is *anointing*. Observe in the text, “I anointed you with oil.” As soon as a man is cleansed, he becomes fit for the Lord’s service. One of the first instincts of a forgiven sinner is to become a servant in the house of his pardoning God. Listen to David in the fifty-first Psalm, “Then will I teach transgressors your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto you.” Forgiven himself, he desires to be a preacher to others. But before we can serve God we must be anointed to the service. God will have no unanointed priest in His temple, but His Holy Spirit is the Anointing which He bestows upon every one of the pardoned.

Not to me as the preacher alone is this anointing given, though I desire to have it more and more for your sakes, but for every one of you is this unction appointed. “You have an anointing from the Holy One,” your eyes are anointed with eye salve, that you may see and discern the mystery of fellowship with God. Your hands have been anointed that you may be laborers together with God, and you have been anointed in heart, in body, soul, and spirit, that your entire man, filled with the indwelling Deity, may be consecrated to noblest ends. I pray God to give His children to feel this anointing more and more.

We believe in no priestcraft, no setting apart of any set of men who are to minister in holy things as substitutes for their brethren, but all you who are saints are alike kings and priests unto God. Though by nature sinners, who would have been in hell but for grace divine, you are now made priests to God today, to minister before His throne. There, amidst the fires of Gehennam, would have been your everlasting portion, but there, within the veil, where the glory which excels reveals its radiance, is your

proper position today by the rights which sovereign grace has bestowed upon you. “I washed you with water and I anointed you with oil.”

Dear brother in Christ, I want you to realize these privileges *now*. As I said about cleansing so say I again, do not let Satan make you think it to be a myth, or that it does not belong to you at this precise instant of time. The reality and present character of divine blessings is a point never to be forgotten. Today you are justified. You are altogether without a blot in God’s sight, as He sees you in His dear Son. You are without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, as you stand in Jesus, and then at this hour you are anointed to priesthood by the Holy Spirit. Let not Satan tell you that you are not so called and qualified, for as a child of God you are indeed a partaker of the Holy Ghost. Go to your knees in prayer as an anointed priest, go to your Sunday school this afternoon, or street preaching, or whatever else may be your form of ministry, go to it as having an unction from God, an anointing to do the work which the Lord has appointed you to do. In the double blessedness of cleansing as a washed sinner, and qualification as an anointed one, rejoice in the Lord your God!

But, my dear brethren, our heavenly Father stops nowhere when He once begins to lavish forth His mercy, He abounds in His loving-kindnesses, and therefore I ask your attention to the next covenant mercy, He *clothes* His people. The Holy Spirit in this passage seems to have exhausted human imagery in order to set forth the sumptuous apparel in which God has been pleased to clothe His people. Four modes of description are used. First, it is said, “I clothed you also with brodered work.” This was the work which was wrought by the needles of the well-skilled women of Israel—most delicate and cunning work. Garments intended for glory and beauty, such as the priests’ vestments, were made by dexterous fingers long accustomed to the needle.

Now, when I read that God clothes His people with embroidered work, it teaches me that the righteousness with which God covers His people is a work of labor, of skill, of care, of thought—not merely labor (though our Lord Jesus Christ labored well, a very Hercules was He in toil), not rough labor, thoughtless, and unskilled, not the labor of the hammer, but of the needle, in a fair and well-trained hand. The wisdom of our God was exercised about the way of justifying a sinner, great thoughts of JEHOVAH went out about the methods of making unrighteous ones righteous, and causing the unjust to become the Righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Each stitch of embroidery demands its thought, each motion of the needle is a matter of care and anxiety, so in every part of the covenant of grace, divine thoughts were abundantly exercised.

See how resplendently God’s attributes are all seen in the way of justification! In the robe with which Christ has covered us, it is impossible to say which of the divine attributes are most to be seen. There is His justice, for all that the law demands it receives in the sacrifice of Jesus, and His mercy is equally manifest, for He passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin. There is His power sustaining the Savior, while, at the same time He smites Him, there is His wrath boiling forth against iniquity, and His love resplendent like a fair jewel in the midst of it all. It is a brodered work. Stitch within stitch, with many a cunning twist and wise device, and dainty piece of curious work. Angels have looked at it, and they never saw such brodered work before, and you and I regard it, and we glory that it is matchless, and in heaven as we shall examine it, thread by thread, and stitch by stitch, we shall burst forth into fresh songs of adoring praise and say, “Indeed, most gracious God, You have clothed us with brodered work! What sumptuous apparel! What skill, what wisdom, what power, what grace are blended in the robe of righteousness with which God has covered His people!

Child of God, you are wearing it today, and if Jacob put on Joseph a garment of many colors because he loved him better than his brethren, stand up and think what a garment your heavenly Father has put on you because He loves you so well. A garment of brodered work has He put upon you this day, because He loves you more than angels, and more than archangels, for unto none of these did He ever say, “Yea, I clothed you with brodered work.”—

“How far the heavenly robe exceeds,

*What earthly princes wear!
These ornaments, how bright they shine!
How white the garments are!*

*Strangely, my soul, art thou array'd
By the great Sacred Three!
In sweetest harmony of praise
Let all Thy powers agree."*

Then comes the next thought, "and shod you with badgers' skin." It would be impossible, at this remote period, to guess what animal is referred to here—certainly not the animal we call a badger, but some creature found, I suppose, abundantly in the wilderness, probably had a spotted skin, which skin was afterwards dyed a deep purple and used for leather. Badgers' skins were used, whatever they were, for the covering of the ark and tabernacle in the wilderness. I suppose the leather made of these skins to have been the softest, best, and most durable to be found, and that the meaning of the passage is just this—"I shod you with the best that was to be had." We know that the Jewish women were accustomed to wear shoes made with very delicate leather dyed with a deep purple color. This, of course, was for daintiness and luxury, and it is mentioned to show the great riches of the Jewish people, and the luxuries with which God had endowed them. I use the term spiritually thus, and bid you mark the riches of the Lord's people.

Moreover, behold the durability of that righteousness which God has given to us. We have to pass through a wilderness of briers and thorns, and our shoes are fit for it. Our Jesus has not given us a brodered robe for show only, but He has provided us garments which will bear the wear and toil of the pilgrimage to the skies. He has shod us right well. Sometimes He tells us that our shoes shall be as iron and brass, and that as our days are, so shall our strength be. Paul tells us of the preparation of the Gospel of peace, with which our feet are to be shod, and now here, the text says, "I shod you with badgers' skin."

Believer, you have the best grace, the best righteousness, the best assistance that you can possibly imagine, in order to bring you safely to the right hand of God at the last. Jesus' righteousness is such that, let you tread the desert through up to the remotest age, still that righteousness shall not be worn out, for it is an everlasting righteousness—

*"This spotless robe the same appears
When ruin'd nature sinks in years;
Nor age can change its glorious hue,
The robe of Christ is ever new."*

The figure, then, changes again.

The text says, "I girded you about with fine linen." May I stop a moment, and say to every believer, to try to feel now by the exercise of faith, that you have this brodered robe upon you at this moment, and that these shoes are on your feet at this instant. Believe in the gifts which the covenant of grace secures you, and in Jesus Christ, who is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. But to return to the Word itself, "I girded you with fine linen." That is to set forth the purity of the righteousness which God gives to us—linen, white and fair—fine linen, the best and most expensive fabric, such as was worn by the priests alone.

Child of God, you have on at this very moment, in the sight of God, the righteousness which is of God by faith, and this is so pure that God Himself sees no spot in it. It is so precious that if heaven and earth were sold, such a dress as you wear could not be bought with the price. You are this day arrayed as a priest, you are a priest to offer prayer and praise, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Now, do not forget this, or treat it as if I were talking mere poetry or fiction. It is so. I speak a sober fact most true

and sure to faith. You do at this moment wear the priestly apparel, for you are made of God a priest and a king.

Then the last figure is, “I covered you with silk.” One scarcely knows what the prophet here refers to, as silk does not appear to have been used in his time, but something as near to our modern silk, I suppose, as possible, and this was a royal fabric, soft and delicate, but rarely seen, and only found in imperial courts. “I covered you with silk.” This may represent the splendor of the saints when they appear in the robes of Christ. An angel, I suppose, must be a glorious sight, but though you would be dazzled at the sight of an angel, you would not be half so much surprised as an angel would at the sight of you as you stand arrayed in the righteousness of Christ.

I have never read that God is admired in the angels, but I do read that Jesus Christ is to be admired in all them that believe. The glory of the believer is to be such that even angels, who have been used to supernal splendor, shall be amazed as they look upon the redeemed when covered with the righteousness of Christ. Get you but to spell this word JEHOVAH TSIDKENU, The Lord our Righteousness; get you but to be robed about with the merit of the Redeemer, and I tell you that heaven shall have no courtier before God’s throne more sumptuously arrayed than you are—

*“With your Savior’s garment on,
Thou’rt holy as the Holy One.”*

Thus in the four expressions which indicate skill and care, durability and use, purity and priesthood, delicacy and royalty, we have wrapped up a mass of most precious thought—may our minds be on the alert for the working of the thought out. How grateful ought we to be to our good God for such distinguished love!

But this is not all. He who washes us, anoints us, and clothes us then decks us. Observe how the Holy Spirit again seems to labor for expression to set out the ornaments which God has put upon His people, which ornaments I suppose represent the graces of the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit in the regenerate man. I will not detain you an unnecessary minute over them, but ask you to look at each one with your Bibles open. “I put bracelets upon your hands.”

The believer being saved becomes a worker, and when he works with the bracelets of faith and love upon his hands, how fair a worker he becomes! And, Christian, you have this honor. You work for God, trusting in God. You work for God, loving God, having no motive to constrain you but that of disinterested affection. You have these bracelets upon your hands. “And a chain on your neck.” And what is this but the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, when that neck which once would not bend, a stiff neck, a rebellions neck with a proud obstinate iron sinew, bows itself before the Lord, and wears the easy yoke of Christ. Blessed are they to whom God has given this golden chain made of many links of humble gratitude, a meek and quiet spirit. This also has God given to the believer. If you have lost it, bemoan yourself, but certainly it is one of His gifts, and as one of His beloved, He has bestowed it upon you.

Then He speaks of a jewel upon the forehead, or as some read it, “the nose-jewel,” for it was common with the Eastern women to wear a large golden ring or bow in the nose, or the text may refer to a jewel which dangled from the hair upon the brow. Now, every believer has this when he is in his right state, this forehead jewel of an open confession of his Lord, this forehead jewel of a holy boldness, a conscience that gives an answer for itself, meekly, but yet without fear of men, that dauntless courage which could beard the lion in its den for Christ, could rush through perils and through toils for Jesus. This forehead jewel God has been given to some of us at any rate. May we always wear it. This is one of the brightest ornaments of Christians before men. When it is backed up with the other ornaments, it is one of the noblest that a Christian spirit can wear.

Nor is the list exhausted. “I put earrings in your ears.” And there are no earrings more precious than these two which I will let you see. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

That is the best earring to wear in all the world, “My sheep hear my voice.” God has given His people the earring of discernment, “a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers,” and the other is the earring of affection, by which, hearing the voice of Jesus, they know His voice, and at once arise and with cheerfulness follow Him. Yes, these are the ornaments of the Christian.

And then it is added, “And I put a beautiful crown upon your head.” God will not stop halfway, His people shall wear the best of the best and all of the best. He will adorn their feet with shoes of badgers’ skin, and He will crown their head with a diadem of beauty. Now, heir of salvation, you are this day one of God’s princes. You may be very poor, you may feel very low spirited, you may have all sorts of troubles to fight with, but you are down in the red roll of the princes of the blood, you belong to heaven’s true aristocracy. Be you who you may, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are not knighted, nor made a baron, or a peer, but you are actually taken into the royal family itself, you are a king, and you shall reign with Jesus Christ forever and ever. “To him that overcomes will I give to sit upon my throne, even as I have overcome and am set down with my Father upon His throne.” See your dignity, Christian, I say nothing to make you proud, but I would say much to make you glad in the Lord, and to make you rejoice in the mercies which He has given you.

There is nothing which you could wish for when in your spiritual senses, which you have not already got. All your capacious powers can wish is given you in the covenant of grace. If imagination should take her utmost stretch, and fly upon the wings of the morning to the uttermost ends of all conception, yet could she not compass nor dream of what God has prepared for them that love Him. Only the Spirit can reveal to you these depths of mercy, these treasures of loving-kindness, these mountains of mercy, these hills of frankincense. You are rich to all the intents of bliss, you are rich to the full measure of heaven and earth, for all that that covenant can give is yours today by “Promises which are yea and amen, in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us.”

I am a poor speaker on such a theme as this, and though I have tried to entice you so far as I can into this river of divine goodness, I have only led you up to the ankles yet. God’s Spirit could take you far deeper, for all the mercies you have received are only just the beginnings of what are coming. Well did we sing just now—

*“Glory to God for all the grace
I have not tasted yet.”*

That is the larger part of the grace, the grace to come. The present is good, oh, how good! but the future is better, ah, how much better! Beyond the river there comes the best of all. Our wine does not grow weaker towards the end of the feast, but He has kept the best wine until the last. And, oh! what will it be to drink at the table of the King Eternal, draughts of His blessed love, in the place where sin and trouble shall never come to intervene and break our peace? O brethren, wait awhile, your day shall come, and your enemies shall be beneath your feet, and Satan shall be trampled there, and you—

*“Far from a world of grief and sin
With God eternally shut in,”*

shall know what God has done, and forever has intended to do for His beloved ones.

II. Thus have I, as well as I could, set before you food for contemplation. Now, I want to DRAW TWO OR THREE REFLECTIONS FROM THIS, and we will have done.

The first is this, sitting down before the Lord in quiet this afternoon, reading this passage, turning over sentence by sentence, I think the emotion of the soul would express itself in words like these—“And what am I? and what is my father’s house, that you have brought me hitherto? And whence is this to me? Why me, Lord? Why me?” Depreciate divine mercies, and you will not marvel that you receive

them, appreciate them at their proper estimate, and you will wonder and weep, and wonder and love, and wonder and adore that ever such an unworthy thing as you should be so singularly favored.

I will not linger over the reflection—that is for your closet rather than for my pulpit, but the next one is this, what a wretched return have we made to God for these amazing benefits bestowed! There are some parts of the earth where the soil is so fruitful, that to quote the language of a certain writer, you have but to tickle it with the hoe and it laughs with plenty, but there are other soils where you must plow and plow, and plow, and manure, and use all arts to get but handfuls after all.

Surely these last soils are very like ourselves. God has done great things for us, and we have done little things for God. I picked up on the Alp side a glistening stone one day, and I noticed that the whole heap of stones which had been broken up for mending the roads was like the one which I picked up, and in it there were sparkling pieces of gold. Everyone could see that there was gold in the stone, and we asked the geologist if it were not so. Yes, all the stones with which they mend the road had gold in them. Well, but why not extract the gold? Because it was in such miserably small quantities that it would never have paid for the extraction.

Really, this is very much like ourselves. If there be some good thing in us, it is in such small quantities, and seems to be imbedded in such hard quartz, that God's great machinery of grace seems to be a waste of power, if I may so speak, when we compare the results in us with the effort which God puts forth towards us. I know there is no waste, and in the end He will show that the means were only commensurate with the result, but as far as we now go, and can see of it, think of Christ sweating the great sweat of blood, think of Him afterwards going up and yielding Himself to die the death of the cross, the incarnate God dying for the sins of men! and the result of it is—what? A member of a church, a wealthy man, who, when there is a collection, gives a four-penny piece. Did you ever see such a step from the sublime to the ridiculous as that? And yet it is so.

Ay, and then take the best—*the best* of us. You smile because I put it in that shape, but conceive God Himself coming here on earth, bleeding and dying, and the most earnest man is the result. There is still a fall, a wretched, miserable fall from what God did down to what the most earnest of us can do for Him. This is a thing to be bemoaned, and to be grieved over, for such is the debt we owe to God, that if we spend all the strength we have morning, noon, and night, and wear ourselves out in the Master's service, and had fifty such lives to give, and ended them all at the stake, yet still the sacrifice were as nothing compared to what is due to the infinite majesty of the love of God.

I lead you to a reflection which is more sad than these, and that reflection is, How base, then, in the light of this amazing mercy does our sin appear! I have read of one who was extremely poor, and who was helped by a Christian man—helped again and again, and yet when the officers were out searching after the Protestant Christian, the man to betray him for the sake of the reward, was the neighbor who had constantly eaten at his table, and who had been helped by his charity. This was brutal, that he who was so much under obligation should yet become a traitor. And yet it was only a neighbor.

Your case is worse, believer, for you are a friend, and more, you profess to be a child of God, to be in union with Christ, and yet you have been a traitor to Jesus! O sweet Lord of my heart, and monarch of my soul, with precious blood You have sealed me as Your own, and fool that I am, that I should cast my eyes on other beauties, beauties did I call them?—other shams, other painted Jezebels! Wretch that I am, to wander thus in search of vain delights, to seek after earthly joys, to set my soul on earthly loves, and let my Lord and Savior go.

O you virgin souls that follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, may you never wander from your spiritual chastity as some of us have done. O you whose delights are with Him still, who in the garden of nuts and among the beds of spices, have beheld His face and seen those eyes which are like the fishponds of Heshbon by the walls of Bath-rabbim—O you who have been enchanted with His presence, cling you yet to His skirts, keep you ever to His company, and let no enchantment of the world induce you to desert Him.

But we, O what shall we do? Though like Peter we have denied Him, yet like Peter we can say, “You know all things, you know that I love you.” Jesus, believe not our words, but believe our actions this morning. Look not askance upon us because of our ill manners, forget the past, and clasp us to Your breast anew. Into Your precious blood cast the multitude of our offenses, and forgive us freely and graciously. Once again let the flames of Your love flash into our hearts till our hearts also grow warm, and then never, never let them become chilled again. Let us be fastened to the cross, bound with cords even to the horns of the altar, that we may be Yours in full fellowship, sweet service, and growing conformity, all the days of our life.

Now, beloved, the practical result, if what I have said be carried out, will be most blessed, but to push it home, I would say, what is there that any of us can do this morning for Christ? Since we have received so much, what can we give in return this morning? It shall be the lot of some of you to say, “He shall have the sweet cane which I have bought with money, and the fat of my sacrifices. If I cannot speak for Him, I will give to Him, I will let Him see that I love Him, for like the holy women, I will minister unto Him of my substance.”

Others of you will say, “I cannot do that, but I will speak a good word for Him this day; I will go to the school, or to the street, or to the prayer meeting, or to the Bible class, and I will try to speak to some one about his soul. If I may but paint my Master in lovely hues, so that one heart shall be enchanted with Him, I hope He will accept what I shall try to do.” Now make that a resolution, that this day something shall be done by you for Christ. And another will say, “Alas! I cannot speak, I shall have no opportunity, but I will get me to my chamber, and I will there speak with God on Christ’s behalf, and I will not let Him go except He bless me, and the church, and all the cause and kingdom of my Lord.”

Ah, beloved, Christ will take of you anything that comes from your heart, whatever the gift may be. However feeble, and weak, and insignificant it may seem to others, it shall be rich and comely to Him, if it comes from your heart. You owe all to Him! What will you render to Him? What will you do more than others? Not to earn anything, or seek a reward, but because He has loved you, love you Him, and serve Him, in return. God give you to give the ready answer, and the acceptable answer, and may He accept it, for Jesus’ sake. I would, this morning, you all had a share in these mercies. Some of you have not. The mercy is that the door is not shut. “Whosoever believes on the Son of God, has everlasting life.” Trust Jesus, and you shall be saved.—

*“Come, naked, and adorn your souls
In robes prepared by God,
Wrought by the labors of His Son,
And dyed in His own blood.*

*Great God, the treasures of Thy love
Are everlasting mines,
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins.*

*The happy gates of Gospel grace
Stand open night and day,
Lord, we are come to seek supplies,
And drive our wants away.”*

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Ezekiel 16:9-14.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.